

BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY: REBUILD BETTER

THREE INSIGHTS

WOMEN AND ECOMMERCE IN AFRICA

DATE: **TUESDAY 22/06**

THEME: **GENDER**

FORMAT: **WEBINAR**

SPEAKERS

- **Tolulope George-Yanwah**, Ghana Country Manager, Jumia
- **Jumoke Jagun-Dokunmu**, Regional Director, Eastern Africa, IFC
- **Joanna Kahiluoto**, Policy Officer, European Commission

- **Samuel Schueth**, Research Director, Kantar Public
- **Charlotte Ntim**, Disruptive Technology Officer, IFC

Moderator:

Anne Kabugi, Africa Regional Lead, IFC

IN THIS WEBINAR, OUR PANELLISTS DISCUSSED THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER EQUALITY IF WE TRULY WANT TO REBUILD BETTER, HOW BUSINESSES OWNED BY WOMEN WERE IMPACTED BY THE PANDEMIC, AND WHY WE NEED TO CREATE A DIGITAL ECONOMY THAT IS INCLUSIVE.

OUR SPEAKERS TOUCHED ON TOPICS RELATED TO THE BENEFITS OF CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN ECOMMERCE, HOW WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS CAN RECOVER FROM THE IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC, AND WHY CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS CAN FOSTER GENDER EQUALITY IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY.

KEY INSIGHTS

1 ACHIEVING AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY DEPENDS ON FOSTERING GENDER EQUALITY

Jumoke Jagun-Dokunmu opened the panel presenting the economic benefits of closing the gender digital gap. Women still lack the same access that men have to digital tools and technologies, there are gender inequalities in financial support and training for women entrepreneurs, and men hold a disproportionately large share of tech jobs. As Charlotte Ntim explained, research has shown that in African countries, ecommerce is key to closing the gap between women and men entrepreneurs. Africa is the fastest-growing market of ecommerce in the world—and by equalising sales of

men and women businesses, studies have estimated an additional US\$ 15 billion in revenue could be made by women-owned ecommerce businesses. To this end, initiatives that offer digital training and financial support aimed at gender equality are critical for us to rebuild better.

INITIATIVES THAT OFFER DIGITAL TRAINING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT AIMED AT GENDER EQUALITY ARE CRITICAL FOR US TO REBUILD BETTER.

2 THE PANDEMIC HAS HIT WOMEN BUSINESSES THE HARDEST, BUT THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO RECOVER

Research shows that the ecommerce market in many African countries has grown during the pandemic. However, while sales in online businesses owned by men have increased, the opposite happened to women entrepreneurs. Samuel Schueth pointed out that most women-owned businesses tend to be microenterprises, which are less resilient to disruptions, and the surge in care responsibilities due to COVID-19 has also affected women disproportionately. For Tolulope George-Yanwah, despite the challenges, some women entrepreneurs have been able to develop their businesses by exploring the benefits of social media marketplaces. However, he argues that more business training and financial support are crucial for women entrepreneurs to overcome important barriers, such as the gender gap, to access mobile internet and increase their small presence in high-value sectors.

3 WE MUST CREATE A DIGITAL ECONOMY THAT IS NOT BIASED AGAINST WOMEN

Promoting women's economic empowerment and supporting women entrepreneurs in ecommerce are not only critical to ensuring a more inclusive economic model, they are also essential components to guarantee that both men and women benefit from the opportunities brought about by digitalisation. Joanna Kahiluoto highlighted that cross-sector partnerships involving international organisations, companies, and governments have succeeded in providing financial support and education in technology skills to women entrepreneurs so that they are better placed to take advantage of untapped business opportunities in the online world. These collaborative initiatives also contribute to building a digital economy that considers the specific asset needs of women and the preferences of women when opening their businesses on the internet, shopping online, or taking a virtual course.

MORE BUSINESS TRAINING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT ARE CRUCIAL FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS TO OVERCOME IMPORTANT BARRIERS, SUCH AS THE GENDER GAP, TO ACCESS MOBILE INTERNET AND INCREASE THEIR SMALL PRESENCE IN HIGH-VALUE SECTORS

RESOURCES

- [Women and Ecommerce in Africa](#)
- [Digital2Equal: Expanding Opportunities for Women](#)
- [Factsheet - EU Gender Action Plan \(GAP\) 2021-2025](#)